

Law Department exists to provide high quality legal services and guidance to the City Council, City Manager, departments, boards, agencies, utilities and commissions of the City.

Overview

The Law Department has three main functions: provide legal counsel for City Council and City staff, provide legal representation for the City and prosecute cases in Municipal Court. A staff of 17 attorneys and eight support staff accomplish the activities. Staff is divided into prosecutorial and civil legal sections. The Department is financed solely from the General Fund with the exception of 100 percent of a Senior Attorney's salary, whose primary responsibility is to assist with bond issues related to economic development and pension matters.

Finance and Operations

Civil legal staff perform a variety of roles: providing legal advice, drafting and reviewing contracts, rendering legal opinions and conducting litigation for the City.

A significant role of the Law Department is to represent the City in civil legal actions, including labor, utility franchise, and environmental disputes and negotiations. Law staff also provides legal advice to the City Council, City departments and boards. A staff of eight attorneys focuses on handling the diverse requests including:

- Drafting and reviewing proposed contracts
- Resolutions and ordinances
- Defending the City in tort claims
- Rendering legal opinions
- Assisting with the City's legislative program

Selected Service Level Measures				
	2000	2001	2002	2003
Legal opinions rendered	419	459	497	497
Revenue bond issues closed	11	18	19	19
Ordinances reviewed	491	389	446	446
Contracts reviewed	1,026	929	1,000	1,000
Hours/ordinance reviewed	1.29	1.37	1.30	1.30
Hours/contract reviewed	0.78	0.79	0.7	0.7



Prosecution examining a witness during a mock trial.

Selected Service Level Measures				
	2000	2001	2002	2003
Cases set for trial	34,640	35,083	35,584	35,584
Hours per appeal	3.28	3.32	3.64	3.64
Number of appeals	324	323	300	300

All claims filed against the City are reviewed and processed by the Law Department. The review ascertains the relative merits of the claims, and staff attempts to settle claims when appropriate. Claim costs are funded from the Self Insurance Fund, a component of the Finance Department.

Another core function is prosecuting offenders in Municipal Court while maintaining "walk-in" hours to assist citizens. A staff of seven attorneys and a prosecution supervisor provide the service and are supported by two clerical positions.

Based on the current docket structure, prosecutors represent the City on 33 Municipal Court dockets and maintain office hours to assist citizens on a walk-in basis. In addition, prosecutors engage in case re-

view prior to the beginning of the dockets. Staff also represents the City in Municipal Court appeals.

A diversion coordinator, housed in the prosecution section, administers the City's diversion and deferred judgment programs. The programs

are available for eligible first time offenders and offenses that include speeding, petit larceny, certain drug offenses, DUI and domestic violence. In every diversion case, program fees and fines are assessed to finance all program costs.

The Law Department also has oversight of the Victim Rights Center. The center provides notice, as required by Kansas Law, to crime victims of certain court proceedings, which include but are not limited to plea hearings, continuances, trials, sentencing, sentence modifications, probation violation hearings and appeals.

The replacement of the antiquated Public Safety System is scheduled for implementation in the fourth quarter of 2002 and will be utilized in conjunction with Police and Municipal Court. The new computer system will encompass utilization of bar code and drivers' license scanning, imaging and Internet technology. The Integrated Public Safety System will offer a centralized information system for Police, Prosecution, and Court. An imaging component of the public safety system will allow multiple users to simultaneously access single case files; significantly reduce storage and filing problems; and facilitate case review and preparation functions. Imaging will provide desktop viewing of case documents once the documents have been entered into the system, eliminating the task of filing and re-filing case files.

Additional automation is included in 2002 with the implementation a drug court software program. The software will consolidate defendants' information, providing the drug court team one centralized access point for defendant data.

Highlights

- ✓ Implementation of the new integrated public safety system and imaging technology is projected for fourth quarter 2002.

Selected Service Level Measures - Diversion				
	2000	2001	2002	2003
DUI diversions accepted	727	625	655	655
Petit theft diversions accepted	328	468	480	480
Speeding diversions accepted	323	308	315	315
Drug diversions accepted	379	445	465	465
DV diversions accepted	471	375	375	375

Law Department Budget Summary

	2001 Actual	2002 Adopted	2002 Revised	2003 Adopted	2004 Approved
Personal Services	1,477,576	1,534,750	1,601,570	1,621,680	1,647,090
Contractual Services	267,177	237,350	238,990	253,450	253,450
Commodities	7,071	8,510	7,010	7,010	7,010
Capital Outlay	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Total Local Expenditures	1,751,824	1,780,610	1,847,570	1,882,140	1,907,550
General Fund	1,751,824	1,780,610	1,847,570	1,882,140	1,907,550
Total full-time positions	25	25	25	25	25
Total part-time positions	2	1	2	1	1
Total FTE positions	25.50	25.25	25.50	25.25	25.25